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25 February 1965

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE
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*Vietnam: General Khanh arrived in Hong Kong from South Vietnam today following a formal transfer of his armed forces command to General "Little" Minh.

[redacted] Khanh's future assignment will depend upon the quality of his performance in the new role of ambassador-at-large, and that it is by no means certain he will eventually replace General Khiem as ambassador to the US.]

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Efforts by ambitious General Thi to replace Khanh's military supporters with his own followers [are] appear to be causing concern in military circles. Thi, who claims he is eager to resume command of I Corps, so far [has] seems to have the backing of Air Force Chief General Ky for personnel shifts he wishes to make.

[General Minh states that Thi has prepared a list of proposed military changes including two divisional commands near Saigon and at least five province chiefs. Minh charges that Thi is acting without regard to lines of authority and believes that, so long as Thi and Ky are in positions of power, instability is inevitable.]

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[Meanwhile, the Soviets are apparently intensifying their efforts to deter the US from more far-reaching actions in Vietnam and are privately urging the US to consider some sort of negotiated settlement. At a 23 February Soviet reception in Vienna, Soviet officials made a deliberate effort to impress US representatives present with the need for negotiations.]

[The Soviets urged adoption of the French proposal, which called for an international accord excluding all foreign intervention in Indochina. The Soviets kept insisting that the USSR would not become directly involved, but asserted that the "piratical American approach and the bombing of non-military objectives could start a world conflagration."]

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*South Vietnam: The Viet Cong are making large gains in the northern and central provinces of South Vietnam and are accelerating their encroachment into areas formerly controlled by the government.

Government pacification operations have suffered setbacks in the north, particularly in the provinces of Quang Ngai and Binh Dinh, where government control now is limited to the environs of district towns. Farther south, Viet Cong troop build-ups have been reported in Phu Yen and Khanh Hoa Provinces, and the security situation there has badly deteriorated in recent weeks. In Phu Yen, government forces in effect have retired to the district towns, while the Communists retain the initiative and exercise de facto control over most of the countryside.

In the coastal regions of the northern and central provinces, the Viet Cong are continuing to interdict main north-south lines of communication. The Saigon-Hue railroad is closed from Nha Trang to Da Nang, Route 1 is closed in Phu Yen and Binh Dinh Provinces, and Route 14 north of Kontum town is closed.

Heavy fighting has raged since 20 February along lateral Route 19 near the Binh Dinh-Pleiku border, with the Communists endeavoring to cut the supply line linking the II Corps headquarters at Pleiku with its supply depots at Qui Nhon on the coast. Heavy airstrikes, using B-57s, were made yesterday on Viet Cong forces in this combat area.

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*USSR: The Soviet leaders apparently have decided to proceed with the Communist meeting scheduled for 1 March.

The Italian, Bulgarian, and East German parties have announced that they are sending delegations to Moscow. Peiping and the Chinese-oriented parties--the Albanian, Japanese, Indonesian, North Korean, and North Vietnamese--can be expected to boycott the meeting. Rumania, in addition, has maintained its refusal to attend any meeting unless all the invited parties attend. Moscow, therefore, probably can count on at most 19 of the 26 members of the "editorial commission."

This meeting probably will be represented as merely the first of a series of preparatory sessions which will discuss problems facing the Communist movement and measures to promote unity. It is unlikely that it will either endorse a world Communist conference or issue pronouncements on substantive issues in the Sino-Soviet conflict. Any communiqué probably will be limited to an innocuous reference to the value of regular consultations in strengthening cohesion and a display of solidarity in condemning US policy in Vietnam and elsewhere.

The need for Communist bloc unity was the main theme of the Warsaw Pact meeting in January, of Kosygin's statements in North Vietnam and North Korea, and of Soviet treatment of the recent 15th anniversary of the Sino-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Alliance, and Mutual Assistance. At the 1 March meeting, the Russians are likely to avoid any suggestion of a future confrontation or showdown with the Chinese.

(continued)

Peiping has renewed its attack on a 1 March meeting by rebroadcasting on 20 February a statement by a pro-Chinese Australian Communist leader denouncing the gathering as a continuation of Khrushchev's plan to "impose revisionism" on the world movement.

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* Because of the shortage of time for preparation of this item, the analytic interpretation presented here has been produced by the Central Intelligence Agency without the participation of the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State.

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Panama: [Communist agitators are planning to foment new trouble for the Robles government following the arrest of a number of top party leaders early this week]

[Extremist student and labor leaders are organizing a "Committee in Defense of Civil Liberties" as a means of systematically opposing the government.]

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[Redacted]

[Redacted] President Robles himself may be the target of terrorist action if he attends the university graduation ceremonies on 27 February. The Communists may also intend to cause trouble among the large crowds that will be turning out during the pre-Lenten carnival period from 27 February to 3 March.

[Even before the recent arrests, Communist groups had been planning an agitation campaign to arouse feeling against the "secret" negotiations which the government is conducting with the US on the canal issue]

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[Redacted]

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NOTES

Indonesia: Both Communists and official elements are increasing pressure for at least a nominal government take-over of American-owned rubber plantations in North Sumatra. Deputy Prime Minister Subandrio flew there yesterday apparently to announce the government's decision regarding the estates. The US Embassy in Djakarta believes that this will involve some sort of government supervision while at least initially retaining American management.

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British Guiana - Cuba: [Former premier Cheddi Jagan is [] planning to visit Havana on his return next month from a European trip. This will be Jagan's third Cuban visit since April 1960 and will presumably be aimed at obtaining Cuban assistance for his activities in opposition to the Burnham government. Although Jagan is likely to get a sympathetic hearing, Castro may express displeasure over the delinquency of GIMPEX--the trading arm of Jagan's People's Progressive Party--in repaying certain commercial debts it has incurred with Havana.]

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The Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

The Deputy Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

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The Secretary of the Navy

The Secretary of the Air Force

The Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs)

The Assistant Secretary of Defense

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Chief of Staff, United States Air Force

Chief of Staff, United States Army

Commandant, United States Marine Corps

U.S. Rep., Military Committee and Standing Group, NATO

Supreme Allied Commander, Europe

Commander in Chief, Pacific

Commander in Chief, Atlantic

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The Director, The Joint Staff

The Assistant Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of Army

The Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of Navy

The Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force

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